

Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP)

Sector:	Education
SO-2:	Create Conditions for Stability
Program Name:	APEP
Implementer:	Creative Associates International, Inc.
Duration:	April 2003 – Dec 2005

The Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP), managed by Creative Associates International, Inc., is working closely with Afghanistan's Ministry of Education, Ministry of Higher Education and five local implementing partners in a comprehensive program to enrich the quality of and access to, basic education. Four main areas are being addressed:

1. Accelerated Learning: This program provides primary education to nearly 170,000 over-aged students, especially girls, whose educations were interrupted or denied by two decades of war in Afghanistan. Accelerated learning allows students to complete two grades per year. The goal is to bring learners up to their appropriate grade level then move them into government schools. Some 6,778 teachers have been trained to lead these classes. A team of 680 teacher trainers prepared them, having themselves been trained by APEP Master Trainers. Approximately 40% of the teachers are women. APEP has provided each teacher with instructional materials and classroom supplies. Students in



Accelerated learning students at a class in Kabul organized by the Afghan Women's Educational Center, one of APEP's five local partner organizations.

the accelerated learning classes have received backpacks containing basic school items. APEP's accelerated learning program grew from a pilot activity for 15,000 students in three provinces to a major supplemental education effort providing instruction to over-aged students in 17 provinces. About 56% of APEP's accelerated learning students are girls.

2. Textbook Printing And Distribution: A one-time emergency initiative in 2002, this has become a central and recurring component of USAID's direct assistance to the Ministry of Education and schools nationwide. The Ministry of

Education has neither the funds nor its own printing capacity to meet the needs of its students for textbooks.

APEP, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and American Manufacturers Export Group, has printed 27 million of the Ministry's textbooks in both Dari and Pashto. Approximately 16.2 million of them were printed in 2004 alone. The textbooks are for Grades 1 through 12 in all secular subjects, and have been distributed to schools throughout Afghanistan.



APEP has printed 27 million of the 42 million USAID funded textbooks for Afghan schools nationwide.

3. Teacher Training: APEP has created, and is conducting, a specialized trainer-of-trainers program to enable teachers to develop skills they need to deal with the special requirements of accelerated learning. The majority of the accelerated learning teachers are themselves not high school graduates and most have never attended teacher training programs. Supporting APEP's teacher training session is its radio-based teacher training (RTT) program.

USAID initiated the RTT program in 2003 and aimed it at three provinces. RTT proved to be an economical and effective way of reaching large numbers of teachers. In subsequent months, RTT has continued to increase its broadcast area and is now available nationwide via two national broadcasters and 26 local radio stations.



APEP has produced and designed teacher training manuals on child-centered methods.

As RTT grew, it augmented its radio-based teacher training program by creating and broadcasting new programs and introducing social messages into the weekly programs. In 2003, RTT produced and broadcast 148 programs which aired twice weekly in both Dari and Pashto. In May 2004, the schedule expanded to daily broadcasts, which led to 594 programs being aired in 2004. In part to measure the impact of RTT, a formal radio-based course has been offered to supplement the teacher training broadcasts. Nearly 10,000 teachers registered for the course.

Interestingly, 37% of the teachers trained to lead APEP accelerated learning classes also teach in the formal school system. Many say they are also regular listeners to RTT broadcasts. As a result, the teaching methodologies being offered by APEP are finding their way into the formal school system.

4. Education Support Services (ESS) To Education Ministries: APEP's Education Support Services (ESS) has made education, management, and technical specialists available to key ministries and associated agencies. Seven professional staff are detailed to the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Academic Council on Education to improve policy formulation, strategic planning and program development, and monitoring and evaluation.

Although APEP was initially designed as a primary education program, the need to establish linkages with higher education activities quickly became apparent, especially in the area of teacher education. A teacher education assessment was commissioned by USAID in late 2003 to analyze pre- and in-service teacher training in Afghanistan. From that, a multi-donor, multi-stakeholder initiative developed. By mid-2004, the Ministry of Education had recognized the value of this team approach and adopted the Teacher Education Program (TEP), as it is now known, as a major Ministry-led initiative.

By the end of 2004, TEP had developed a training approach, designed training materials, and prepared trainers for nationwide in-service teacher training. Equally important was the response of the international donor community, which has pledged millions of dollars in long-term funding for TEP.

APEP and the impact it is achieving represents a dramatic change from the relatively modest primary education activity at its inception in January 2003 to the expanded program it is today.



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